

**Adam Crum**  
Commissioner

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**Department of Health  
and Social Services**

Anchorage, Alaska

**STATE OF ALASKA**

**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elizabeth Manning, DHSS, (907) 269-4541, [elizabeth.manning@alaska.gov](mailto:elizabeth.manning@alaska.gov)

### **Know the health risks of wildfire smoke and take precautions during air advisories**

July 10, 2019 ANCHORAGE – Smoke produced by several active wildfires has resulted in air quality advisories for many regions of the state in recent weeks, including Southeast, Southwest, Southcentral, Central and the Eastern Interior of Alaska.

Alaskans should check for air quality advisories on the [Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation \(DEC\) Air Quality Advisories/Episodes web page](#) (or sign up to receive air quality alerts using [DEC's Air Online Services](#)) and take appropriate precautions to limit exposure to wildfire smoke.

The likelihood that a person will experience health effects from inhalation of wildfire smoke is determined by several factors, including the composition of the smoke, the intensity and length of exposure, and the health of the exposed person. Wildfire smoke inhalation can cause a variety of health effects if inhaled in large enough quantities, including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) attacks, chest pain, coughing, congestion, fatigue, headaches, irritated sinuses, rapid heartbeat, runny nose, scratchy throat, shortness of breath, stinging eyes and wheezing.

Children are generally more sensitive to smoke inhalation because they breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults, and because their bodies and airways are still developing. Older adults also tend to be more sensitive to smoke inhalation, especially if they have underlying heart or lung disease. Persons of any age with conditions like asthma, COPD, heart disease or chest pain are especially sensitive to smoke inhalation.

If you have a respiratory or heart condition and your symptoms become worse, contact your health care provider or call 911 in the event of an emergency.

One of the best ways to limit your exposure is to stay indoors with the windows and doors closed. Running an air conditioner or air purifier may also help indoor air quality.

Besides limiting time outdoors, indoor air quality can be improved by not smoking or burning anything inside your house, including tobacco, candles or incense. As soon as outdoor air quality improves, air out your home to reduce indoor air pollution.

These tips and more can be found on the [Section of Epidemiology’s Frequently Asked Questions About Wildfire Smoke](#) and on the [DHSS Wildfire Smoke web page](#).

Here are these resources and more for Alaskans concerned about wildfire smoke:

- [Wildfire Smoke Health Information](#), DHSS, Division of Public Health
- [Wildfire Smoke: Frequently Asked Questions](#), DHSS, Division of Public Health
- [AirNow](#), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Local Air Quality Conditions by Zip Code
- [Air Quality Advisories/Episodes](#), DEC, Division of Air Quality
- [Alaska Air Quality Index](#), Real Time Data from DEC’s Air Monitors
- [Daily Smoke Outlooks](#), Wildland Fire Air Quality Response, U.S. Forest Service

Air Quality Category	Air Quality Index	Visibility	Precautions to Take
<b>Good</b>	<b>0 – 50</b>	<b>10+ miles</b>	None
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>51 – 100</b>	<b>6 to 9 miles</b>	Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.
<b>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</b>	<b>101 – 150</b>	<b>3 to 5 miles</b>	People with heart or lung disease, older adults and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.
<b>Unhealthy</b>	<b>151 – 200</b>	<b>1.5 to 2.5 miles</b>	People with heart or lung disease, older adults and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should limit prolonged or heavy exertion.
<b>Very Unhealthy</b>	<b>201 – 300</b>	<b>0.9 to 1.4 miles</b>	People with heart or lung disease, older adults and children should avoid any outdoor activity. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.
<b>Hazardous</b>	<b>301 – 500</b>	<b>0.8 miles or less</b>	Everyone should avoid any outdoor exertion. People with heart or lung disease, older adults and children should remain indoors.

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